(e) by when it is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. YERRAN NAIDU): (a) to (e) Information is being obtained from the State Government and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Steps to revive tourism in Jammu and Kashmir

*220. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether following successful elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir, any special efforts have been/are being made to revive tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and to restore its lost glory as a tourist attaction; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) and (b) With the improvement in the ground situation in the State of J & K, efforts have been initiated to revive tourism in the State. One of the major steps taken by the State Govt. in this direction is declaration of tourism as industry. The State Government also proposes to start Winter Sports at Gulmarg during the current year. The State Government is also considering a special package of incentives for the people associated with the Tourist trade which include interest subsidy on the loans taken by various damaged Units, re-construction of departmental and J & K Tourism Development Corporation assets, repairs of local tourism infrastructure and the launching of massive publicity campaign. Government of India have already announced writing off of outstanding loans and interests of all borrowers who have not been able to repay due to militancy and whose original borrowing is less than Rs. 50,000/-. Government of India have also decided to provide an amount of Rs. 2.40 crores for setting up of a Convention/ Conference Centre at Leh to give a further fillip to tourism in this area.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Relaxations in the Forest and Environment Act for Maharashtra

1355. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Maharashtra Chief Minister had requested the Prime Minister in 1996 to make relaxations in the Forest and Environment Act, for implementation of development works in Adivasi areas of Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes Sir, the letter was received from Chief Minister Maharashtra in July, 1996 highlighting the hardships being faced by the Adivasies due to enforcement of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and suggesting delegation of power to grant permission under the provision of this Act to the State Government upto an area of 5 ha.

(b) The proposal of Chief Minister Maharashtra was examined by the Ministry of Environment & Forests and the position is an follows:—

The relaxations in the guidelines issued under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as amended on 25th October, 1992 has already been provided. In respect of proposals for laying of transmission line, pipelines for drinking water supply and exploratory drilling for prospecting of oil which do not involve any felling of tress, simplified procedure has been prescribed in the guidelines. The condition of raising

compensatory afforestation on equivalent non-forest land has also been relaxed in respect of proposals involving construction of link roads, small water works, minor irrigation works, school building, dispensaries, hospitals, tiny rural industrial sheds of the Government which directly benefit the people of the area, provided diversion of forest area does not exceed 20ha. wherein the compensatory afforestation can be done over the degraded forest land. For speedy clearance of projects under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the powers have also been delegated to the Regional Offices of the Ministry. The Regional Chief Conservator of Forests is competent to finally dispose off the proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 5 ha. except in respect of proposals for regularisation of encroachment and mining. The powers have also been delegated to the RCCF for proposals involving forest area above 5 ha. and upto 20 ha. for examination in consultation with state Advisory Group and such proposals alongwith views of the Advisory Group recorded by RCCF are sent to the Ministry for final decision only.

The Chief Minister is being informed accordingly.

Making Dwelling Unit a Fundamental Right

1356. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chairman, National Human Rights Commission, while addressing a function in New Delhi on the World Habitat Day on October 7, 1996, had said that the right to own a decent dwelling should be made a fundamental right; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response thereto, indicating the estimated number of dwelling units required in urban and rural areas to provide a dwelling unit to each family, without an abode?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government is committed to the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to adequate standard of living, through a number of concrete measures outlined in the National Housing Policy. Estimates made by the National Building Organisation (NBO) based on 1991 Census data reveal a housing shortage of 21.56 million dwelling units as of 1.3.96, comprising 7.71 million units in urban areas and 13.85 million in rural areas.

Encouraging the use of Solar Energy

1357. SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any concrete steps have been taken to encourage the use of solar energy in some of States and Union Territories;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and Union Territory-wise;

(c) whether Government have launched any programmes to encourage popularisation of solar energy system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, alongwith their results, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER & MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) to (d) The Government is encouraging the use of solar energy through socially oriented and market oriented schemes covering solar photovoltaic and solar thermal energy products in all the States and Union Territories. The subsidies and soft loans